

Oh Bother!

Many's the day I wish
I could be that child again.
The one with no real worries.

Hours on end of plastic soldiers
locked in bloodless battles.
Endless playing on the bridge
with Pooh and Rabbit,
as Poohsticks and
Poor Eeyore go floating by.

King of the mountain on haystacks.
Climb up, roll down.
Up and down again and again, itching.
Running around and around to exhaustion.

Cannonballs and torpedoes at the pool.
Day after day.
Meandering home red-eyed whenever,
in time for Mama's comforting meals.
Tucked in tight at night with a gentle kiss.

When does it end, this careless innocence?
I mean, what day exactly?
Do we intentionally leave it behind
as the embarrassing garbage of being a child
when we start playing grownup for real?

Or does it gradually dissipate
as we nervously embrace the new adventures
of growing up,
subtly tracked in the mire and bogs
of their expectations?

Is it really gone, that innocence?
Or just buried in noisy incessancy,
as a meek little mouse
too timid to wander far from
the security of its quiet nest.

One tentative step at a time
back into balance.
Then another and another.
Then scurry across the bridge
to drop a fir cone upstream.
Then drop two to see
Who comes out first.

Do we really ever forget
how play Poohsticks?